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1. Climate policy refugees

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Climate policy refugees

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Body

The rocky road to the federal election is running parallel to the even rockier road to the (latest) "last chance to save the world" UN climate conference in Paris. In fact, their paths are not so much running parallel as frequently colliding. Both are littered with refugees, in one case real, in the other phantasmagorical.

Profound Climate Concern - which tends to overlap with Harper Derangement Syndrome - has become a key factor in Canadian politics. It lies at the bottom of rabid opposition to further development of the oilsands and pipelines, the proliferation of subsidies for unreliable wind and solar energy, and a hodgepodge of plans to curb emissions via regulation, taxes or trading systems. All mean lost jobs and reduced GDP. Only Stephen Harper has dared to point this out, and has been roundly abused for doing so.

The most recent outburst of HDS is over the Syrian refugee crisis. Again, it's not just that condemnation of Harper over lack of climate policy and failure to let in more refugees run parallel. They are in fact closely linked via the claim that "climate refugees" will eventually be moving across the globe in vast numbers.

Given a very genuine crisis as millions seek to escape murderous dictators and religious fanatics, the notion that even greater disruptions might be caused by emissions-induced bad weather appears downright ridiculous.

Indeed, it is arguably President Obama's preference for commanding sea levels rather than establishing lines in the sand that has at least contributed to this crisis. To that extent, the Syrians are climate policy refugees.

One surprising feature of Peter Mansbridge's interviews with the party leaders this week was that he didn't raise climate or Paris (at least with the three who matter). Syrian refugees inevitably came up, but primarily as a weapon with which to bash the prime minister.

Both Trudeau and Mulcair volunteered that Paris was high on their list of priorities. Neither explained how taking more draconian climate action would help to "kick start" the economy rather than merely kick it. But then neither man was loopy enough to link Syria with climate (although I haven't seen Elizabeth May's knee-to-knee with Mansbridge, which was due on Thursday night).

Attempts to link climate change and refugees have long been a feature of Profound Climate Concern. Last year, at a climate conference put on by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation - a Liberal party sleeper cell funded with $125 million of taxpayers' money - the foundation's president and CEO, Morris Rosenberg, actually suggested the Syrian

conflict might be rooted not so much in dictatorship and religious sectarianism as ... climate-change-caused drought.

In his 2000 autobiography Where on Earth Are We Going, Canada's Maurice Strong, in many ways the mastermind behind the bid for a global green dictatorship, projected migrants "stumbling over the polar ice caps" to avoid climate horrors. A rather indirect route, admittedly.

One of environmentalism's alarmist heroes, Oxford's Norman Myers, predicted that by 2010 there would be 50 million climate refugees. Far from being treated with skepticism, his claims were pushed by the United Nations Environment Program, UNEP (of which Strong was the first head). When a blogger pointed out that, far from being depopulated, the allegedly climatebenighted regions had in fact shown heavy population growth, UNEP quietly removed the claims from its website. But it wasn't just that UNEP had bought Myers' claim, they had funded his research. Meanwhile his ghastly projections had been reported widely by other UN agencies and governments, and cited in the U.K.'s grossly-torqued Stern Review (Myers was also the origin of claims about an alleged ***biological holocaust*** that would rob the world of a million species by the end of the last century. He just couldn't name any).

According to the 2007 Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, the genocide in Darfur was the first "climate-change conflict." Radical Islamist Janjaweed militias were driven to rape, torture and murder by a conflict over resources between farmers and pastoralists. Changing weather patterns made them do it.

Certainly there were major ecological problems in Darfur related to population pressures and deforestation, as well as government restrictions on migration, but to suggest that the fundamental problem might be industrial society's emissions is so ridiculous that it is hard to believe any sane person would give it credence.

The Summary of the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report, issued last year, continued to assert both that climate change would increase displacement and punish those without the resources to move. It also claimed that climate change "can indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts by amplifying well-documented drivers of these conflicts such as poverty and economic shocks." But insofar as they seek to prevent poor countries from using fossil fuels - which have never been so abundant and cheap - the international climate control crowd in fact force them to stay in poverty, waiting for vast promised transfers from rich countries that look about as likely to arrive as an international agreement on Syrian refugees.

Mulcair and Trudeau profess that Paris, and adjusting the global climate, are high on their list of priorities, but one doubts they would suggest that carbon taxes, cap and trade, or more windmills could help solve the violence and refugee problems of the Middle East. One has no doubt at all that either Bashar Assad or ISIL are the least bit concerned about their carbon footprint. But then their carbon footprint is hardly the problem. Still, at least Obama is helping Iran go nuclear. !@COPYRIGHT=© 2015 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

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